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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL, AFGHANISTAN,
GENERAL MOTORS, EU POSITIONS;BERLIN

- ¶1. Lead Stories Summary
- ¶2. 20th Anniversary of the Fall of the Wall
- ¶3. OEF Offensive in Kunduz
- ¶4. GM/Opel
- ¶5. Top EU Jobs

- ¶1. Lead Stories

Primetime newscast and most papers opened with the festivities celebrating the 20th anniversary of the fall of the wall. Frankfurter Allgemeine headlined: "Festivity of Freedom and Unity-the world was watching Berlin." Business dailies led with stories on the rapidly recovering German economy. Editorials focused on the anniversary of the fall of the Wall.

- ¶2. 20th Anniversary of the Fall of the Wall

German editorials focused almost exclusively today on the state of the German reunification and on what November 9 meant to Germans. However, Tagesspiegel noted in a front-page editorial that "the repercussions of the fall of the Wall on the minds of so many people throughout the world make clear that the desire for change and freedom is ongoing."

Westdeutsche Zeitung remarked: "It is high time that we develop a culture commemorating the happiest day of our recent history that allows future generations to experience the struggle for freedom, which did not end with the peaceful fall of the Wall. Let's hope that this revolution, which began with the courage of Solidarnosc in Poland and ended with the transformation of a world order is finally appropriately recognized in history lessons. Maybe the biggest mistake in the process that brought about German unity was that its creators did not dare to make November 9 a national holiday.... It would be good to feel encouraged by the revolution in 1989 and to understand that our freedom is not a given.... In a time in which our excitement for democracy and the European integration is fading because of the difficulties arising from a globalized world and the economic crisis, those Germans who risked everything for their

freedom should be a model."

On its front page, Frankfurter Allgemeine opined: "Two decades after the fall of the Wall, Germans seem to be even more moved by what Chancellor Merkel described as the happiest day in recent German history. Many have tears in their eyes. There is no doubt that November 9 turned into Germany's secret national holiday. It was not made the official one because many politicians and intellectuals believed the date also stands for a dark chapter in Germany's past. The list of darkness spans from the November revolution after WWI and the Hitler-Ludendorff coup to the Night of the Broken Glass pogrom of 1938.... For 20 years, November 9 has no longer just been a day of national shame, but also one of national joy and, for East Germans, a day of justified pride. No other day epitomizes the lows and highs of Germany's past better than November 9."

Mass tabloid Bild editorialized: "The peaceful November revolution was a great turning point in the history of mankind. We still have tears of joy in our eyes. Thanks to all those politicians in east and west who place the will of the people above their ideologies and careers. Gorbachev risked much. Thanks to all politicians whose heart was beating for freedom. They took to the streets with the people and forged an alliance with them that united Germany and Europe. The will of the people and the farsightedness of politicians have made us happy. A good future can be built upon this alliance of happiness."

Westdeutscher Rundfunk radio notes: "The mental differences between the East and the West are still substantial. The economic imbalance is not the only reason for it. We still have not gotten

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used to each other, and are suspicious of each other. Those on the other side still appear to be strangers. This is difficult to explain. However, this has also to do with the disappointed expectations and the disillusionment that quickly arose after 1989. Not just the East has changed, also the West's piece and quiet has gone. However, despite these difficulties, this day can be celebrated. The wind of freedom blew from the East, also to the benefit of the West."

13. OEF Offensive in Kunduz

Berliner Zeitung editorialized: "We slowly get the feeling that the German soldiers in Afghanistan no longer fight for our security but are there to defend themselves. It is even worse: given that they no longer manage to do this, American troops help out with small but robust offensives against the Taliban, like in recent days in the province of Kunduz. The German army did not want to participate and would not have been allowed to do so under its current mandate. This raises the questions: why is the Bundeswehr there? After the ousting of the Taliban politicians supported the mission by saying that it is about the political and economic reconstruction of the country, noting that without military security there could be no civilian development. While the reconstruction got stuck and democracy became an illusion in recent years, the security situation significantly deteriorated. As a result, the armed protection must be increased, also where the Bundeswehr is deployed. The German army lacks the equipment as well as the mandate to do this-and certainly the support of the people. Before the soldiers plunge into an endless civil war, politicians must decide what the Germans can achieve in Afghanistan apart from fighting a war."

14. GM/Opel

Sueddeutsche headlined "Friendly Tones from Detroit," and editorialized: "Those who believed that the haggling over the future of the ailing Opel carmaker has come to an end must rethink. After the stopped sale of Opel to Magna the fight is only getting started. If it is correct what the analysts of Moody's found, GM is facing a giant challenge. The restructuring of the German subsidiary could cost as much as five billion euros. This is money that the U.S. group that exited Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in July will hardly have. The recent visit of GM CEO Henderson is therefore particularly one thing: a charm offensive. Apart from GM's plans, this is also about the contribution the German government and other

countries are willing to make to the Opel factories. Those who followed the Opel saga in recent months know what is coming next. It will be about subsidies, jobs, keeping plants and national interests. Although it sounds different at the moment, the German government will find it difficult to refuse giving GM the same assistance it promised Magna recently. However, the government is warned. The company from across the ocean demonstrated only last week that its position can change over night. For GM, its not about Opel or jobs. GM cares particularly about itself. The government should take this into account and examine carefully whether GM's plans are sustainable."

15. Top EU Jobs

Sueddeutsche reported under the headline "Milliband's withdrawal," that "the British foreign secretary does not want a top EU job," adding: "In the race for the top EU jobs, one of the favorite candidates has given up shortly before reaching the goal.... Former British Prime Minister Blair, however, still desires to become the first Council president.... Blair called several of his former colleges in European capitals over the last weekend."

Handelsblatt headlined "Appointing top jobs in EU is being postponed" and highlighted: "the decision-making over new top EU

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jobs is getting difficult. Eastern Europeans are now making claims."

MURPHY